

INDIANA PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SERVICES COMMISSION

**ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

**TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE
THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES, THROUGH
EMPOWERMENT AND ADVOCACY**



**THE PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR INDIANA
MEMBER NATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS NETWORK**

Who is IPAS?

IPAS is an independent state agency separate from all other state agencies and programs. IPAS was established in 1977 in response to federal requirements for a program to advocate for the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. Since then, more programs have been added to serve the advocacy needs of specific groups of individuals with disabilities.

Like the rest of America, Indiana obtains great strengths from the diversity of our people. The advantages of diversity can be seen all around us, through people who share differing abilities, experiences, traditions, and ideas that enrich our lives and our culture. The Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services Commission defends the rights of citizens with different abilities and extend equal opportunity and empowerment to people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have rights under the law

Today, there are more than 56 million Americans with disabilities. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. The United States Congress has determined that disabilities are a natural part of the human experience, and to help ensure that no one is excluded from participating in the mainstream of society, Congress has enacted laws providing a variety of support services and programs for people with disabilities.

People with developmental or physical disabilities, and/ or mental illnesses, are also protected under the laws that prohibit discrimination, abuse and neglect. Like all Americans, they have the right to live their lives as fully and independently as possible and with the freedom to make their own choices and decisions to the extent that their abilities will allow.

To see that the human, legal and civil rights of people with disabilities are affirmed, Congress established protection and advocacy (P&A) systems in each state. Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services provides advocacy for Indiana citizens. IPAS proudly serves people with disabilities, helping them exercise their rights, as well as providing training and resources to ensure their inclusion in the life of our communities.

Rights are being wronged

TOO OFTEN, INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ARE:

- abused or neglected by caregivers;
- denied appropriate medical, rehabilitation, or psychiatric treatment;
- denied free and appropriate public educational services;
- denied physical access to public places and governmental services;
- discriminated against when trying to obtain employment or housing;
- denied the ability to make their own decisions and be a fully participating member of their community;
- denied the assistive technology services or devices they need to be more independent;

- denied the control of their private information being released without their consent; and
- denied the right to make their own choices as they prepare for employment through Vocational Rehabilitation or Ticket to Work training programs.

Righting the wrongs

IPAS can help by:

- helping you understand your rights;
- helping you learn self-advocacy skills;
- advising you on what steps you can take to secure your rights, such as appealing denials and filing complaints with appropriate governmental agencies; and
- representing you with an IPAS Advocate, and in some cases an attorney, to correct rights violations.

Every year, IPAS represents hundreds of Hoosiers with disabilities in securing their rights to full community participation and helps thousands more through information and referral services.



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You may acquire a copy of the IPAS established priorities by calling the phone number or writing to the address on the back.

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An Equal Opportunity Employer

Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services provides services to all individuals with disabilities within the guidelines set forth by federal legislation regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, ancestry or disability.